

## Reminiscences

# THAT'S HOW IT WAS IN 1907

By ALISON ARNOLD

Present-day Duxbury with its sidewalks and shops is a sharp contrast from the sleepy little village of 1907. In those days, what sidewalks there were, were narrow, grassy paths. Even the roads were not surfaced. The wheels of carriages and the few automobiles sank to their hub-caps in the sandy soil of the main roads in the heat of summer, and churned in deep mud when it rained. Each spring the roads were sprayed with tar, which made a sticky mess abhorred by housewives, although it did "lay the dust."

There were no stores at Hall's Corner then. The new A&P store is on the site of Cushing's livery stable. The three grocery stores were Sweetser and Arnold's, W. O. Peterson's — where Walter Prince now lives—and Ford's store on Tremont St. which burned down and was one of the oldest in the United States. Sweetser and Arnold's sold dry goods, pots and pans and East India goods, as well as groceries. W. O. Peterson sold groceries, which were delivered in a wagon driven by Harry Tammett. Josselyn's store, then run by the present owner's uncle, Charles Josselyn, sold "periodicals" and all kinds of fascinating penny candy.

Meat was sold by H. E. Merry, who made the rounds in a wagon and hacked off delicious steaks and roasts at your door. He usually was accompanied by several of his tow-headed children. Fish, vegetables and fruit also were sold in this manner, but local vegetables could be bought from the Reynolds farm or from Bill Weston or Charlie Holmes on Surplus St. Small boys often came to your door with freshly dug clams for sale for 35 cents a peck.

Cows from the Parker farm grazed nonchalantly on the golf links and were often unwilling targets for golf balls. The Yacht Club stood on stilts over the water at the foot of Freeman Place. Japanese lanterns were used as decorations for the dances in the small hall where the dancers learned to dodge the post. When the tide was low the mud flats were green with eel grass and it was fun to see how far you could walk out without sinking too deep.

There were movies twice a week at Mattakeesett Hall—silent ones, with Jimmy Ingalls playing the piano accompaniment. On Sundays in summer this hall became the Catholic Church. Dr. Noyes and Dr. Spalding were the town's two doctors and there were no dentists nearer than Plymouth.

There was no town water. Windmills whirled and clattered and water came from kitchen pumps or wells, although there were a few electric pumps. There were no street lights, and kerosene lanterns were carried on night visits. Gas was not piped until 1928.

The High School was Partridge Academy, which burned down. It was one of the three white buildings on Tremont St., with the Unitarian Church and the Town Hall. The primary schools were the Point School on Cedar St., the Tarkiln School, and the South

Duxbury School, which is now headquarters for the Girl Scouts. The Grammar School was in the village. In those days there were no school busses.

Joshua Cushing, father of Mrs. William Facey of Surplus St. lived in the house on Washington St. now owned by the Herbert Kelleys. He was an auctioneer and stored his antiques in the house next door where the Oliver Barkers now live. He held many auctions there and ladder-back chairs and pewter porringers went for 25 cents.

Forget-me-nots grew profusely in the brook between the golf links and the Reynolds farm. There were mayflowers, ladyslippers and Dutchman's pipes to be found in the woods behind the cemetery, and hermit thrushes sang their lilting songs there at dusk. Fragrant lilacs were placed on the Civil War veterans' graves on Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July meant a parade along Washington St., with red, white and blue bunting trimming the wagons. But when katydids scratched at the night and crickets chanted their doleful dirge it meant that Duxbury days were over for another season.